

**Remarks:**

Claims 1-2 and 5-11 are presented for Examiner Reichle's consideration. Claim 4 has been cancelled by this amendment.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

By way of the Office Action mailed November 25, 2003, the Examiner approved the previously submitted drawings, but objected to the submitted drawings on additional grounds. The Examiner has indicated that the specific portions of the core or distribution layers below the target areas (with specific functionality) should be separately identified. While Applicants feel that such are illustrated clearly by the broken lines separating the various layers into areas below the target area and areas outside the target areas, additional reference numbers have been added to address the Examiner's concerns. Additionally, a "brace" has been added to reference number 37 to further indicate the areas outside the target areas. The Examiner's objections to the Figures should now be rendered moot.

By way of the same Office Action, the Examiner objected to the disclosure for not clarifying what is meant by the "area outside the target area", and "not below the target area". The Specification has been amended to provide verbiage to describe the "number" and "brace" additions to the Figures. Support within the Specification for the "target areas" is found at least at page 7 of the originally filed Specification in the Definition section, lines 18-25. Support for "areas below the target areas" is found in the originally filed Specification at least at page 4, lines 6-11 ("through the structure in the area below the target area"), lines 15-22, page 13, lines 19-22, page 14, lines 4-17 ("core which: has a higher density below the target area than elsewhere"), line 11 ("outside of the area"), lines 24-25, page 15, lines 1-4 ("outside of the target area"), lines 12-14 ("areas of the absorbent core that are not below the target area"), lines 15-17 ("outside the target area"), lines 25 ("outside the target area"), page 16, lines 3-5 ("corresponding to the target area"), and the original Abstract text. The Examiner has also requested that the word "may" be removed from the text of the replacement paragraph on page 9. This has been done. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the Examiner's objections with regards to the description should now be rendered moot.

By way of the same Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the claims based on a series of

informalities. It is believed that these informalities have been fully addressed by this amendment, and therefore the objection has been rendered moot.

By way of the same Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 112 first paragraph. Such claims have been amended, in addition to an amendment to claim 1. It is believed that such claim amendments have rendered the Examiner's rejection moot. Support for the amendments may be found in the Specification at page 15, lines 7-14 and lines 15-25.

By way of the same Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 6, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Steger et al. This rejection is respectfully **traversed** to the extent that it may apply to the currently presented claims for the following reasons. Applicants do not believe the Steger reference relies on differential speed of absorbency in a product. Instead, the Steger reference relies on delayed access to capacity. Nevertheless, the claims have been further amended to advance prosecution. It is not believed that the Steger reference teaches the currently claimed structure of amended claim 1, which utilizes density and binders to affect fluid movement. For this reason, it is not believed that the reference teaches the subject matter of claim 6, which depends from claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

By way of the same Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 6 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Raidel, PCT '546 (translated through U.S. '714). This rejection is respectfully **traversed** to the extent that it may apply to the currently presented claims for the following reasons. While the Raidel reference discloses the presence of numerous functional layers to direct drainage in a localized manner, it is not believed that such reference focuses on the distinct methodologies for directing such fluids utilizing a targeted area, and creating a structural arrangement using these methodologies in order to provide a contrast in performance between a focused target area and remaining areas. In particular, it is not believed that Raidel teaches the specific density (based on compression or fiber dimensions/count) or soluble binder structures described in the current claims. Since claims 6, and 8-9 would depend from an allowable base claim, such would also be allowable. Since claim 10 now also incorporates a limitation relating to either a specific density or soluble binder structure, claim 10 would likewise be allowable. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

By way of the same Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 5, 7, and 9-10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hansen et al '896. This rejection is respectfully **traversed** to the extent that it may apply to the currently presented claims for the following reasons. The Examiner continues to assert that the Hansen reference describes increased density and a soluble binder in the area directly below the target region. While the reference describes use of binder and also

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discusses densification, Applicants respectfully assert that the limited below target area density structure and binder placement limitations of the current claim language are not taught by the reference. In particular, the reference teaches at col. 47, lines 43-60 densification of entire pads. Likewise, there appears only to be a focus on separating a product into distinct zones in connection with particulate superabsorbants. Such is described in connection with a target zone 556 at col. 47, lines 28-40. Since the currently claimed targeted density and soluble binder limitations are not found in the reference, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn. Similar arguments would also apply to the Weisman reference previously asserted.

A Petition for a Two Month Extension of Time has been filed contemporaneously with this action, extending the time to respond to April 26, 2004, since April 25, 2004 fell on a Sunday. Additionally, an RCE has been filed with this Amendment. The Examiner should also note that IDS materials which were previously objected to, but placed in the file, will be resubmitted by Applicants shortly. Upon receipt, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to make record of review of such references or alternatively, indicate why such review has not been conducted.

For the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the currently presented claims are in form for allowance. However, should the Examiner feel that issues remain unresolved, she is encouraged to call the undersigned at (770) 587-8646.

Please charge any prosecutorial fees which are due to Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. deposit account number 11-0875.

Respectfully submitted,

M.A. DALEY ET AL.

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